

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
National Container Group Warehouse Fire - Removal Polrep
Initial and Final Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region VI

Subject: POLREP #1
Initial and Final POLREP
National Container Group Warehouse Fire

Houston, TX
Latitude: 29.6173227 Longitude: -95.4157077

To: Ronnie Crossland, EPA R6

From: Madison Baxter, On-Scene Coordinator

Date: 5/30/2018

Reporting Period: 5/28/18 through 6/1/18

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	Contract Number:
D.O. Number:	Action Memo Date:
Response Authority: CERCLA	Response Type: Emergency
Response Lead: STATE	Incident Category:
NPL Status: Non NPL	Operable Unit:
Mobilization Date: 5/28/2018	Start Date:
Demob Date: 5/29/2018	Completion Date:
CERCLIS ID:	RCRIS ID:
ERNS No.:	State Notification:
FPN#:	Reimbursable Account #:

1.1.1 Incident Category

Emergency Response

1.1.2 Site Description

The site is approximately 20 acres in size and contains 5 industrial/commercial warehouses. Four of the warehouses are connected and the 5th is separated by a 50-foot alley type pathway. The warehouses are occupied by a used clothing processor, an office furniture wholesaler, a used office furniture company, and a drum and tote recycling facility operated by National Container Group (NCG).

1.1.2.1 Location

The site is located at 13131 Alameda Road, Houston, Harris County, TX, approximately 10 miles south-southwest of downtown Houston. Geological coordinates for the site are 29.617453, -95.415729. The site is in a commercial/industrial area with residential areas to the east and west and commercial/industrial areas to the north and south.

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

Threat is chemicals and waste from the burning totes and drums being discharged into Sims Bayou along with the firefighting water. Second threat is that the burning chemicals will give off toxic fumes and affect the surrounding area.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

Contaminated water is flowing into Sims Bayou. Air monitoring is showing no contaminants in the air

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

At approximately 0645 hours on the morning of 28 May 2018, a fire was reported in one of the warehouses on the site. Eventually growing to 4 alarms, the fire consumed the warehouse occupied by NCG, a drum and tote recycler/washout facility. At this time, the cause of the fire remains unknown.

The fire was reported to the NRC (#1213443) at approximately 0907 on 18 May. EPA START was mobilized at that time for a Tier 2 response and arrived on site at approximately 1000 hours. Investigators from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) arrived on site at approximately 1100 hours.

The site contained approximately 10,000 totes and an unknown quantity of drums that were brought to the site to be cleaned out and recycled. All containers were stated to be "RCRA empty" by the warehouse manager. As the fire grew, the plastic totes melted down and their contents were either consumed by the fire or released onto the concrete-covered, outside storage area.

As the firefighting operations continued, the firefighting water and the contents of the totes combined and flowed into a stormwater drain at the east end of the property, eventually discharging into Sims Bayou.

The fire was contained at approximately 1800 hours on 18 May but hot spots were monitored throughout the

night and into the next day.

START demobilized at 1800 hours on 28 May and returned at 1000 hours on 29 May, then demobilized at 1500 hours on 29 May 2018.

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

The responsible party (RP), National Container Group, contracted with OMI/Garner Environmental as the environmental cleanup company. OMI arrived on site at approximately 1300 hours on 28 May 2018 and began to address the runoff from the site into Sims Bayou. The City of Houston brought in a backhoe to block the runoff from reaching Sims at approximately 1500. An earthen dam was in place and the flow to the bayou was stopped at approximately 1700.

At approximately 1900, OMI brought to the site vacuum trucks and frac tanks to pump out the liquid in the drainage ditch and then to store it onsite to await analytical profiling.

As there was an impact to the aquatic life in the bayou, Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) was contacted and arrived on site at 0800 hours on 29 May 2018.

As of 0819 hours on 30 May, OMI had pumped out approximately 130,000 gallons of liquid from the drainage ditch and the water level had dropped by approximately 3 feet from the night before. OMI is estimating that the liquid removal will be completed by the morning of 31 May. They are currently developing a plan for impacted soil remediation of the ditch.

NCG also contracted with TCEH to provide water monitoring and sampling. The RP is currently requesting to cease sampling and monitoring activities as the runoff to the bayou has been stopped.

Water monitoring of Sims Bayou ended 1 June 2018.

2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)

The RP, National Container Group, has taken responsibility and is providing clean up plans to TCEQ. TCEQ spoke with TPWD regarding the fish kill in Sims Bayou. At this time, TPWD does not intend to seek restitution for the fish kill at the majority of the fish killed are considered invasive species. A count of the fish was not conducted by TPWD.

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

<i>Waste Stream</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Manifest #</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Disposal</i>

2.2 Planning Section

2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

As TCEQ has taken the lead enforcement role, the only further activities will be receiving progress updates on the cleanup.

2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

2.2.1.2 Next Steps

2.2.2 Issues

2.3 Logistics Section

No information available at this time.

2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

2.5 Other Command Staff

No information available at this time.

3. Participating Entities

3.1 Unified Command

Houston Fire Department
Houston Fire Department HazMat
Harris County HazMat

3.2 Cooperating Agencies

Environmental Protection Agency
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Texas Parks and Wildlife
Houston METRO
Houston Police Department
City of Houston

4. Personnel On Site

Daniel Tighe - START
Corey Bercher - START
Kendra Bernhagen - TCEQ

5. Definition of Terms

No information available at this time.

6. Additional sources of information

No information available at this time.

7. Situational Reference Materials

No information available at this time.